(d) The steps being taken by the coal companies to improve the quality of coal supplies to consumers include the following:-

(i) An Action Plan for installation of feeder breakers and coal handling plants is being implemented to ensure quality of coal supplied.

(ii) Stones are being segregated at the time of loading of coal to the extent practicable.

(iii) Power utilities have been requested to post their representatives at loading points to undertake joint sampling of coal before it is despatched to them.

Participation in International Trade Fairs

4605. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Swiss fair ticks off Titan and other 'Made-in-India' exhibits" appearing in the 'Economic Times' dated August 6, 1996;

(b) if so, whether any protest was lodged with the International Fair Authorities against preventing Indian participation in Basle, Switzerland;

(c) if so, the reaction of IFA thereon;

(d) whether the Government propose to lay down some norms for participation in such international trade fairs and rebut the charge of practising a protectionist trade policy in view of India's free trade policy;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reaction of the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). M/s Titan International Marketing Ltd. has made a representation to the Committee of Exhibitors that lays down the criteria for participation in the International Watch, Clock and Jewellery Fair in Basle, Switzerland. However, the Committee of Exhibitors continues to maintain that one of the conditions laid down for participation by a country is that the country should have a liberal trade policy with regard to imports of watches of all origin and import tariff should not be higher than 20 per cent. Thus the matter remains unresolved.

(d) to (f). It is not possible for the Government of India to lay down norms for participation in international fairs organised by foreign private parties outside India. Government has taken up the matter with the Swiss authorities whose initial reaction has been that they have no control over the actions of the Committee of Exhibitors, a private party, that sets the norms for participation. Government is pursuing the matter with the Swiss authorities.

[Translation]

Excise Duty on Marble

4606. PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received representations from several marble trading organisations and people's representatives to decrease or abolish excise duty on marble and lime stone; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b). There is no excise duty on limestone. Regarding marble, Government have received some representations that the excise duty on marble be abolished or reduced from the existing level of Rs. 30 per square metre. These are under consideration.

Foreign Investment in Agriculture

4607. SHRI DEVI BUX SINGH:
DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of foreign proposals cleared for the investment in agriculture sector during the current year alongwith the details thereof, country-wise;

(b) the names of such companies who have sent the proposals and the names of the States where investment is proposed to be made; and

(c) the details of foreign exchange likely to be received in the country every year?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b). 25 foreign direct investment proposals envisaging foreign direct investment of Rs. 45.03 crores have been approved by the Government during the period from 1.1.96 to 31.7.96 in the Agriculture Sector including Horticulture and Floriculture.

The details of such proposals viz. Name and country of foreign collaborator, equity investment involved, item of manufacture/activity are published by the Indian Investment Centre as a supplement to the Monthly Newsletter and copies of these are regularly supplied to the Parliament Library.